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Soviets Hunt Fake Spy's Mythical U.S. Agents

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(as told to Peter Hahn)
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NEW YORK — The life of a "spy who refuses to spy," is a nightmare of fear, fear of a blunder that will bring the secret police on your neck.

It was the life I lived in spring of 1961.

I had become involved in the cloak-and-dagger war between East and West while preparing a singing engagement at the State Opera House in the Soviet sector of Berlin.

American intelligence officers asked me to report on Russians I met there. But they washed their hands of me when the Communists asked me to work for them.

The Soviet KGB — state security service — was more persistent. And because I did not want to give up my big singing chance I strung them along with false information.

MOTHER THREATENED

But then Evgeni Khedrov — in reality Colonel Evgeni A. Zastrovstsev of the Red intelligence service — offered me money for my services, and when I re-

This is the third installment in the exclusive account of the author's experiences at the hands of Communist agents. Miss Hammerstein was released on March 26, 1964, after serving 27 months in Russian and East German jails.

fused he threatened the safety of my mother, a doctor in New York.

In my frantic efforts to get out I told them I was being questioned by "Mr. Smith," a fictitious U.S. "intelligence officer." With the CIA interested in me, surely Khedrov would have no further use for me.

It was a big mistake. "Make him interested in you," said Khedrov. "With your contacts in East Berlin, I'm sure he'll want to recruit you."

I reported Smith had fallen for his ruse. The KGB man handed me a tiny camera, sewn into the corner of a soiled handkerchief. Urging "extreme caution," he told me to "photograph any papers of importance" I could find at Smith's office.

But what papers of importance could I copy? I realized that I had to manufacture my own "secret documents."

Having been a secretary for the U.S. Army in the early '50s, I knew what files in government offices looked like. I bought a box of government-size, standard file cards. I persuaded the owners of several passport-photo shops to sell me old "mug shots" which had never been picked up. Then I invented "cover names," "areas of operations," and other cryptic data, which I typed on the cards.

16 FAKE CARDS

Whenever "hard" facts were needed, I filled in: "Refer to '201-file,' the term used in all U.S. government offices for personnel reference index. On the back of the cards, I noted "payments," giving the name of West Berlin banks, and rubber-stamping on dates. Then I pasted on the photos.

I manufactured 16 cards of "Mr. Smith's contact file." The "agents" listed on them "operated" all over East Germany, in Czechoslovakia and Poland. Two of them I described as "working inside the Soviet Union."

I photographed one of the cards and took the film to Khedrov. From his excitement at our next meeting, I knew KGB wires were humming all over eastern Europe in an effort to track down my "paper agents."

Now they trusted me. I had penetrated the Soviet intelligence net in Germany.

I was a frequent visitor to Karlshorst, the Soviet headquarters compound. I could enter the intelligence compound almost at will. I attended frequent parties. One of Khedrov's friends, a major named Kolya Polayet, had a crush on me and showered me with gifts.

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